

year with more than a \$1 trillion projected deficit, these cuts barely scratch the surface of what needs to be done. But make no mistake about it—even these cuts would have been impossible if not for the Republicans taking back the House and making gains in the Senate last November. When Republicans won, they changed the debate in Washington.

Even the press has been forced to acknowledge the depth of our fiscal crisis, though old habits die hard. Just this morning, we witnessed a relapse in the mainstream media as it did its best to enable excessive spending. The headline on the front page of today's Washington Post screamed "Cuts Will Affect Vast Spectrum of Priorities." This made me think of the old joke about the likely reporting at the New York Times on the outbreak of a nuclear conflict: "Nuclear War Breaks Out: Women and Minorities Hardest Hit." But I should not be too hard on the press. They seem to be getting it. There is certainly no denying it. We are spending way more than we are taking in, and, absent real reductions in spending and meaningful reforms to entitlements, this country is cruising toward a legitimate debt crisis that will adversely impact every American family.

This desire to reduce spending and restore the Constitution's limits on the size of government is the new normal for taxpayers. The Obama administration's salad days when they dreamed of permanently expanding the size of the Federal Government are way back in the rearview mirror. Because of the undeniable seriousness of our debt and deficits and the commitment of Republicans to taking it on, the debate has shifted from how do we enlarge the size of government to how can we scale it back. The administration was slow to recognize this. When given his first opportunity to weigh in on this crisis, the President voted "present." His fiscal year 2012 budget was laughable for its failure to take on our deficits and growing debt.

Even Ezra Klein, the liberal Washington Post reporter, could not carry the President's water on this one. Even he couldn't carry the President's water on this one. He wrote that when reading the budget, it is almost like the fiscal commission never happened.

The President's fiscal commission recommended over \$4 trillion in spending reductions, including adjustments to entitlements. I can't say I agree with everything in the commission's proposal, but it was a serious effort to get our Nation's finances back in order. But the President chose to pretend this report did not exist.

Well, since then, they must have done some polling over at the White House. They must have realized that on the most critical issue facing the country, American taxpayers and American families want something more from their President—they want leadership. The President of the United

States can't just subcontract out these issues to other people. The President of the United States has to lead, and in these areas it takes the President. He has to be bold. He has to take a stand. For all of the elegiac comparisons of President Obama to Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan, those were not passive Presidents. On the big issues, they took big risks and they led the country. It seems as though the President's advisers have finally figured this out. They need to get involved in a serious way on the issue of Federal spending.

Sitting back and adding nothing, while your allies demagogue reasonable solutions to pressing problems, is simply not acceptable to the American people. Democrats tried this tired line of attack last week, alleging that Republicans were out to hurt the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. These smears really are beneath the dignity of our elected officials, and they show a total disregard for the common sense of American citizens and the good faith and charity of those who support Republicans. A good first step for the President would be to disavow these statements. He has a chance to do so tomorrow.

The President is giving a much-hyped speech tomorrow on the issue of spending and getting our deficits and debt under control. I can only say I hope he comes through. The people of my home State of Utah and the people of every State are demanding that Washington tackle out-of-control spending. Vague outlines or statements of principle are not going to do it. The President needs to take a stand, or should I say stance.

I would add that the American people don't want solutions to a spending crisis that involve higher taxes. The solution to a spending crisis is not higher taxes that will give the government more money to spend. Our problem is not that citizens are taxed too little; our problem is that government spends too much.

So the President needs to come forward with serious, concrete proposals and commit to working with Congressman RYAN, Speaker BOEHNER, and Senate Republicans to solve this problem.

I am willing to give the President a mulligan on his first budget proposal. The President, like Members of Congress, represents the people. As representatives of the people, we must acknowledge those times when we get it wrong. When the people make it clear that they want their elected officials to go in a different direction, in a democratic republic it is only right that the President and the Congress give voice to those concerns. The President seems to understand that he got it wrong with this first budget.

Taxpayers and families want Washington to take on spending, but the people will not be fooled. If the President comes out tomorrow and speaks in vague generalities, if he comes out and simply defers to Congress, he will have satisfied no one. Being the Presi-

dent of the United States is not like being a law professor. Your job is not merely to facilitate dialog. Your job is to lead.

I look forward to the President's remarks tomorrow. I guess we could call it the President's budget, part deux. My hope is that the sequel will be better than the original.

With that, Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STEM EDUCATION

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a matter that is very important to our country, to Minnesota, and to me, which is science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education or STEM education for short.

As I have traveled around Minnesota, I have heard from many of our high-tech businesses. They fear our students will not be ready to take on the jobs waiting for them when they graduate and, as a result, these jobs will go unfilled and our economy will founder. This is not just true in Minnesota, of course, but across the country—in Pennsylvania, the State of the Presiding Officer, and everywhere in our Nation.

That is why I am addressing our need for a well-trained STEM workforce through the STEM Master Teacher Corps Act, which has been cosponsored by my colleagues, Senators LIEBERMAN and SHAHEEN.

We have been hearing concern about the state of STEM education in our country for over a decade now. In 2000, a 25-member commission, headed by former Senator John Glenn, published a report called "Before It's Too Late," which addressed the pressing need for high-quality math and science teaching.

Five years later, another report—"Rising Above the Gathering Storm"—presented the findings and recommendations of a National Academies commission, chaired by former Lockheed Martin CEO Norm Augustine, concerning the deteriorating condition of STEM education and basic research.

Last year, a followup report, dramatically entitled "Rapidly Approaching Category 5 Hurricane," warned us that the "gathering storm" is now threatening to wipe out U.S. leadership in global science and technology if we don't act fast—and said so with good reason.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly every one of the top 30 fastest growing professions requires

STEM skills. These include jobs in some of the fields that are most critical to the future of our country—health care, energy, climate change, and national security. Yet too few kids are graduating from high school with the interest or the preparation to successfully pursue STEM degrees in college. Well over half of college students in China and Japan major in STEM fields, compared with only one-third of U.S. students.

International standardized tests show that we rank only average or below average in students' math and science performance. The 2009 Program for International Student Assessment placed American 15-year-olds 25th in math and 17th in science out of 34 OECD countries—the developed countries. What is worse is, we are spending more on education per student than any other OECD country in the world, except for Luxembourg.

As Congress works to reform No Child Left Behind this year—and the Presiding Officer is working with me on that on the HELP Committee—I urge my colleagues to consider strongly the importance of STEM education and how to spend our limited resources most effectively. President Obama has proposed recruiting and training 100,000 new STEM teachers in the next decade and has requested \$100 million to advance this worthy goal.

However, many STEM teachers leave the profession within their first few years of teaching, often drawn by far more lucrative salaries elsewhere in science and technology fields. Those talents are valued in the market. So if we are going to invest in recruiting and training new teachers, we also need to invest in retaining and best utilizing those individuals.

The STEM Master Teacher Corps Act is based on a proposal brought forth by President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. It will provide the top K-12 STEM teachers in a participating area with additional professional development, so they can become leaders in their schools and in their communities.

Master teachers will mentor their younger or less-effective peers, giving them guidance and inspiring them to stay in teaching. Master teachers will also network with one another, sharing best practices and resources. Together, these measures will improve the quality and the ability of all teachers to impart strong STEM skills and an eagerness to learn and pass it on to their students.

Providing career advancement opportunities to effective STEM teachers and support to beginning teachers will help increase retention, so our investments in recruitment and training will have an even greater payoff.

In recognition of their excellent work and new leadership responsibilities, it is only fair that these master teachers should be compensated, so my legislation also gives them a salary bump. Our teachers work just as hard as other

STEM professionals, and it is time we recognize that and pay them accordingly. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the median salary offered to recent college graduates in certain STEM-related fields, including physics, computer science, accounting, and engineering, is \$24,000 higher than that offered to a new secondary school teacher and \$30,000 higher than that offered to a new elementary school teacher.

This legislation has been endorsed by more than 60 national and regional groups, ranging from educational organizations such as the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the College Board, and Education Minnesota, to business groups such as LifeScience Alley, the BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota, and the Minnesota High Tech Association. The bill is also supported by rural groups, such as the National Rural Education Association and the Rural School and Community Trust and numerous science and math societies.

I am particularly pleased to have the endorsement of two leading national businesses that also happened to be headquartered in my State, Medtronic and 3M. Both of these companies recognize and support the importance of acting now to ensure a well-trained workforce for the future, and they have already shown a proactive interest in supporting and engaging students in STEM activities.

I was recently at a first robotics event at the University of Minnesota that was astounding. They had two huge auditoriums of these over-130 teams competing in Minnesota in this robotics competition. So I am very grateful for the support of 3M and of Medtronic.

Mr. President, I have a very impressive list of the number of endorsers to the bill, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the full list of endorsers.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING SENATOR
FRANKEN'S STEM MASTER TEACHER CORPS
ACT OF 2011

3M; Alliance for Excellent Education; American Association for the Advancement of Science; American Association of Physicists in Medicine; American Association of Physics Teachers; American Federation of Teachers (AFT); American Institute of Physics; American Mathematical Society; American Physical Society; American Society for Engineering Education; American Society of Civil Engineers; America's Promise Alliance; Arlington, MA STEM Coalition; ASME Center for Public Awareness; Association of Science Materials Centers; Biobusiness Alliance of Minnesota; Campaign for Environmental Literacy; Central Jersey Modeling Institute; College Board; College of Education at Purdue University; Council of State Science Supervisors.

ECOCAD DESIGN GROUP, LLC; Education Development Center; Education Minnesota; Engaged Education Now; For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST); HMC Architects; IEEE-USA; Inter-

national Renewable Energy Technology Institute; Iowa Mathematics and Science Education Partnership; LearnOnLine, Inc.; LifeScience Alley; Materials Research Society; Math for America; Medtronic; Minnesota Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence; Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics; Minnesota High Tech Association; Minnesota Intermediate District 287.

National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Association of State Boards of Education; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; National Education Association (NEA); National Institute of Building Sciences; National Institute for Excellence in Teaching; National Rural Education Association; National Science Center; National Science Teachers Association; New Teacher Center; Ohio Technology and Engineering Educators Association; Ohio Technology Education Advisory Council; The Optical Society; NV STEM Education Coalition; Project Lead The Way; Rural School and Community Trust; School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA); South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics and Science; SPIE, the International Society for Optics and Photonics; STARBASE Minnesota; STEM Education Coalition; TIAX LLC; Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, the Master Teacher Corps Program addresses the recommendations presented in the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology's 2010 K-12 STEM education report and tracks the priorities laid out more than 10 years ago in the Glenn Commission report.

Specifically, it would establish an ongoing system to improve the quality of mathematics and science teaching in grades K-12, and it would improve the working environment and make the teaching profession more attractive for K-12 mathematics and science teachers.

With the planned reform and reauthorization of No Child Left Behind this year, we have a rare and, indeed, ideal opportunity to implement real change in K-12 STEM education in this country. So let's act now, before it is too late, before the storm has fully gathered, and before that rapidly approaching category 5 hurricane destroys the competitive technological edge and the prosperity our country has worked so hard to build and maintain.

I urge my colleagues to join Senators LIEBERMAN, SHAHEEN, and me in supporting a sustained investment in K-12 STEM teacher quality and in raising the standards of the teaching profession through the STEM Master Teacher Corps Act.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-DULUTH'S MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I would also like to take a moment to congratulate the University of Minnesota-Duluth's men's hockey team for capturing their first ever NCAA Division I Championship. The UMD Bulldogs faced off against the Michigan